

UNCLASSIFIED

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
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2/1/80

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*Argentina*

A133

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

TOPIC: Videla Talks to Newspaper Editors About Goodpaster Visit  
PARTICIPANTS: Carlos Fernandez of Somos and Conviccion and John Corr, IO  
PLACE: Ligure Restaurant, Buenos Aires  
DATE: February 1, 1980

Fernandez, a reliable contact, said:

President Videla, in a meeting Jan. 31 at the Casa Rosada with newspaper executives, said that Argentina had agreed in talks with General Goodpaster to limit its grain sales this year to the Soviet Union. Videla said that although grain sales would be limited, Argentina would in fact sell more grain this year than last year to the Soviet Union because it would maintain its "normal" level of grain trade with the USSR.

Apparently putting the best possible face on whatever grain sales limit had been agreed on with Goodpaster, Videla proudly told the executives that Argentina had never been in a stronger position in its relations with the U.S. He said the U.S., in the Goodpaster talks, has offered many concessions, while Argentina had not had to really concede anything.

COMMENT: Videla's definition of "normal" levels of grain sales to the USSR apparently is connected with the Argentine contention that "normal" grain exports with the USSR means annual increases, as Admiral Castro Madero pointed out before he denied what he indeed appeared to have said in Brazil. An American correspondent here reported that Videla also said to the newspaper executives that Argentina was in the position of being "arbiter" between the two superpowers. Another Argentine source said Videla also gave the executives an account of Gen. Goodpaster's sympathy for some of the problems involved in fighting the dirty war here as the result of his experiences in Vietnam. This account was mentioned in weekend political columns. On Monday, a Clarín article mentioned the possibility of Argentina asking the USSR to limit its grain purchases from Argentina. The reporter who wrote the article, Oscar Cardoso of Clarín, said a Foreign Ministry source had given him this information and had also told him the request to limit grain purchases would be made the week of February 11 by the Argentine Embassy in Moscow.

cc:

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